

Extracts from CIA Briefing of House Committee on Foreign Affairs
on 27 February 1962

pages 31 and 32

Mr. Chipperfield. I have noted several questions, Mr. Director, which you answered in the course of your statement. I wonder if you would have from your intelligence information as to the progress of our space programs as compared with the Russians? I have in mind especially if you have any information as to any astronautic failures of the programs in Russia?

Mr. McCone. Yes. We have a considerable amount of information on failures as well as successes with their program. We know that their last attempt was a failure. But we do not believe there was a person aboard or any biological pay load for that matter in that particular instance. We know of no failure that they have had with men aboard, although it is always possible they could have. We also know that in the two instances where they orbited a man, we know there was a man aboard. There is no question about that. Whether that man was the man that is walking around the country making speeches, or not, is another matter. We do know there was a man aboard in the instance of both of those flights.

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Mr. Hays. One other question, Mr. McCone, that I would like to get cleared up, if I could. You said in your statement that we knew that the Russians had made two manned flights. You said we didn't know necessarily that the two men walking around were the two men in these flights. Did you mean that statement to stand literally that way?

Mr. McCone. That is correct, yes.

Mrs. Bolton. He didn't mean two men at the same time.

Mr. Hays. I know. I am assuming from his statement that the man who made the flight might not have been Gagarin.

Mr. McCone. We have no way to relate the man that are presented to the public as to who made the flight might not have been Gagarin.

Mr. McCone. We have no way to relate the men that are presented to the public as to who made the flight.

Mr. Hays. I don't know how far to go, but I have been cleared pretty high as Chairman of the State Department Subcommittee. I saw and heard some things that if I went out on your statement and said that I would be seriously in error do they know something you don't know?

Mr. McCone. I don't think so.

Mr. Hays. You still want your statement to stand?

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Mr. McCone. Yes

Mr. Hays. That we didn't know that it was Gagarin before the Russians announced it was Gagarin?

Mr. McCone. We knew there was a man in both instances.

Mr. Hays. We didn't know his name but we knew what he looked like.

Mr. McCone. Whether it is the same man or not is a matter that we have to take them on faith.

Mr. Hays. I don't agree with that.

Mr. McCone. They saw our man step in and step out. We have no reason to disbelieve it. As far as our intelligence can go and all that I can tell you gentlemen, is that there was a man in each instance in orbit in those two instances.

Mr. Judd. And came back alive.

Mr. McCone. Yes.

Mr. Hays. I don't want to violate anything that I promised not to. Mrs. Bolton is a party to it. But I can tell you we know it was Gagarin who stepped in, we know it was Gagarin it was up there, and we know it was Gagarin that stepped out. I had evidence presented to me that convinced me of that. I didn't want the Committee to go out to somebody and say that the Russians may put a man in orbit but we don't know if they got him back because we don't know if it is the same man. I don't think we ought to underestimate them.

Mr. McCone. It is not my intention to underestimate the Russians, whether it is a man in space or any other thing.

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Remarks: Attached are extracts from the Director's testimony before House Foreign Affairs Committee on Tuesday on the subject of Soviet astronauts. Mr. Warner would like a memorandum on this subject specifically covering the question of whether the Soviet astronauts who were publicly displayed were, in fact, the ones who were orbited around the earth and whether our position has changed on this since our briefing of the Senate Space Committee on this subject.			
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